

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:33
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2016
Empowerment of Rural Consumers
Parthipan Shri R.

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the present consumer movement has largely been confined to the urban centres and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the expanding rural markets have now necessitated shift in focus to the rural consumers, if so, the details thereof and the steps taken thereon; and
- (c) whether the Government has put any mechanism in place to protect the rural consumers by educating them about their rights and empowering them to make decisions based on information about the goods and services and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) to (c) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*33 FOR 26.04.2016 REGARDING EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL CONSUMERS.

(a) to (c): The present consumer movement in the country benefits both the rural and the urban consumers. Liberalization and privatization of the economy has resulted in our markets being integrated with global supply chains. This combined with information explosion and aggressive marketing has given rise to a rapidly growing rural demand for consumer goods.

The enactment of the Consumer Protection Act in 1986 has set in motion a veritable consumer movement in the entire country. 657 Consumer Fora have been established at the district level across the country for the protection and promotion of consumer rights. A wide network of more than 1250 voluntary consumer organisations across the length and breadth of the country has spread the consumer movement in the rural areas.

For strengthening the movement in rural areas, the Government has been encouraging rural consumer centric projects, supporting the State Governments to carry forward the movement to the rural consumers, setting up of consumer clubs in schools and colleges, carrying out publicity campaigns on consumer education and awareness through electronic and print media. Doordarshan has a significant geographic reach and a diverse viewership cutting across the urban-rural population segments and the reach of All India Radio is almost 99% of the country's population and provides an effective platform for reaching out to rural consumers. Print advertisements are published in the National and Regional Newspapers in vernacular languages is significantly aimed at rural consumers. Besides, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are funded to carry out campaigns in rural and remote areas in local languages. The Department also conducts publicity campaigns in rural melas.
